



# **THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS**

**AUSTIN 11, TEXAS**

**PRICE DANIEL**  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL**

October 31, 1951

Hon. Homer Garrison, Jr., Director  
Department of Public Safety  
Austin, Texas

Opinion No. V-1337

Re: Interpretation of the statute  
requiring motor vehicles to  
be equipped with turn indi-  
cating lamps or devices.

Dear Sir:

Your request for an opinion quotes Section 69 of Article 6701d, V.C.S., dealing with directional signals on vehicles, as amended by Senate Bill 183, Acts 52nd Leg., R.S. 1951, ch. 149, p.253, as follows:

"Section 69. Signals by hand and arm or signal device. Any stop or turn signal when required herein shall be given either by means of the hand and arm or by a signal lamp or lamps or mechanical signal device of a type approved by the department. However, when the body of a vehicle or the body and load of any vehicle or in a combination of vehicles projects twenty four (24") inches or more to the left of the center of the steering wheel, or under any condition when a hand and arm signal would not be visible both to the front and rear of such vehicle or vehicles, then such vehicle or vehicles must be equipped with, and said signals must be given by such turn indicating lamps or devices."

Your question is:

"If the flat truck bed of a truck projects twenty-four inches or more to the left of the center of the steering wheel of a vehicle, but not at a height level with the steering wheel, and not at a height sufficient to obscure hand signals, would the truck be required to have directional signal lamps or mechanical signal devices?"

The purpose of Senate Bill 183 is to require vehicles or any combination of vehicles to give distinct and visible stop and turn signals under all circumstances. These signals are to be given by hand or by turn indicating lamps or devices, and under certain circumstances must be given by lamps or mechanical devices.

First, the Legislature took into consideration specific physical characteristics of the vehicle in the following language from Section 69:

" . . . when the body of a vehicle or the body and load of any vehicle or in a combination of vehicles projects twenty four (24") inches or more to the left of the center of the steering wheel . . . such vehicle or vehicles must be equipped with . . . turn indicating lamps or devices." (Emphasis added.)

Second, the Legislature took into consideration all other conditions that might obscure the visibility of hand signals in the following language from Section 69:

" . . . or under any condition when a hand and arm signal would not be visible to the front and rear of such vehicle . . . ."

In the light of the purpose of Senate Bill 183, and in view of the express wording of the Act, it is our opinion that vehicles are not required to be equipped with turn indicating lamps or devices unless the body or load projects twenty-four (24") inches to the left of the center of the steering wheel in the same horizontal plane, or unless a hand or arm signal would not be visible both to the front and rear of the vehicle. Since the body of the vehicle in question does not extend twenty-four inches to the left of the center of the steering wheel in the same horizontal plane, turn indicating lamps or devices are not required for such vehicle unless the load thereon extends twenty-four inches or more to the left of the center of the steering wheel in the same horizontal plane, or unless some other condition obscures hand and arm signals in such a way that they would not be visible both to the front and rear of the vehicle.

The horizontal plane referred to above as extending through the center of the steering wheel extends, of course, over the entire length and breadth of the vehicle. Thus if any part of the body or load of the vehicle projects twenty-four inches or more to the left of a horizontal line through the center of the steering wheel extending from the front to the rear of the vehicle in the same horizontal plane as the center of the steering wheel, the vehicle is required to be equipped with turn indicating lamps or devices.

SUMMARY

Vehicles are required by Section 69 of Article 6701d, V.C.S., as amended by Senate Bill 183, Acts 52nd Leg., R.S. 1951, ch. 149, p. 253, to be equipped with turn indicating lamps or devices if the body or load projects twenty-four inches or more to the left of the center of the steering wheel in the same horizontal plane or if a hand and arm signal would not be visible both to the front and rear of the vehicle.

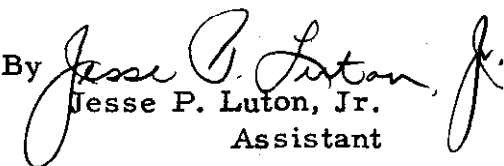
Yours very truly,

PRICE DANIEL  
Attorney General

APPROVED:

Everett Hutchinson  
Executive Assistant

Charles D. Mathews  
First Assistant

By   
Jesse P. Luton, Jr.  
Assistant

JPL:mf